

local level, the local level would be able through their mill levy or through their budget process fund the programs if they truly were that necessary and that needed, if the demand was really there. And, in fact, what happened was that we found out that the demand was not really there because, yes, Senator Kristensen was absolutely correct, there are school districts that still offer, North Platte for example, still offers a driver's ed program, but many do not. And when it came down to the budget times where school districts had difficulty in deciding what budgets they...what programs they were going to keep or not keep because of the budget crunch that they were under, they had to sit down and make some priority decisions. They had to sit down and say, do we want English and math or foreign languages or long-distance learning, do we want those as the priorities or are we going to reduce those in order to keep driver's ed? And what they finally found out is that most of the reduced driver's ed or cut driver's ed or made it a fee where parents had to pay. So in many cases what we found is that the school districts themselves made the decision that it was not a high priority for schools to have to do. Now how does that concept relate to Senator Kristensen's bill? If the state...to me, this is left-handed approach of trying to get accomplished through the back door what they could not get accomplished by going up front through the front door. And that is if we go ahead and maintain that all people in order to get their license at 16 must have driver's ed, we all know the ramifications of that. There is going to be a big push for driver's ed and we all must realize that there are not the driver's ed programs because school districts have chosen that it is not a high priority for school districts to do to teach driver's ed. Now there is a safety center located in Kearney and I understand that Senator Kristensen is well aware that the safety center in Kearney would be glad to go out statewide and do these things, they can do that now, they can do that now. But what, in essence, is going to happen, particularly in western Nebraska where you're not so close to Kearney or what have you, is that there is going to be a big demand put on schools that since the Legislature mandated driver's ed for 16, that there is not enough courses available, and in some cases there are none, and if there are, there are not enough teachers available and we need more simulators and it's very, very cost prohibitive to do that. It is not efficient to do that and particularly in education when you're having to divert from truly educational programs to fund that. And what they would, in essence, do is because of the increased demand because of our